

Tobaccoism

John Harvey Kellogg, MD. From: *Tobaccoism, or How Tobacco Kills*. Battle Creek, Mich: Modern Medicine Publishing Co; 1922.

PREFACE

Tobacco, in its various forms, is one of the most mischievous of all drugs. There is perhaps no other drug which injures the body in so many ways and so universally as does tobacco. Some drugs offer a small degree of compensation for the evil effects which they produce; but tobacco has not a single redeeming feature and gives nothing in return for the \$1,500,000,000.00 which it costs the nation annually, besides the 100,000 lives which it probably destroys.

It has long been known to medical men, chemists and pharmacists, that tobacco is one of the most deadly of all the many poisonous plants known to the botanist. . . .

How marvelous the ability to so camouflage its venom that millions of men are made to believe harmless a weed which almost every other living creature than man, great and small, recognizes and avoids as a baneful poison! Alcoholism, the opium habit and tobaccoism are a trio

of poison habits which have been weighty handicaps to human progress during the last three centuries. In the United States, the subtle spell of opium has been broken by restrictive legislation; the grip of the rum demon has been loosened by the Prohibition Amendment to the Constitution, but the tobacco habit still maintains its strangle-hold and more than one hundred million victims of tobaccoism daily burn incense to the smoke god. . . .

Tobacco has not yet been fully tried before the bar of science. But the tribunal has been prepared and the gathering of evidence has begun and when the final verdict is rendered, it will appear that tobacco is evil and only evil; that as a drug it is far more deadly than alcohol, killing in a dose a thousand times smaller. . . .

John Harvey Kellogg, MD (1852–1943). E. E. Doty, photographer. Source. Prints and Photographs Collection, History of Medicine Division, National Library of Medicine.



When the whole truth is known about tobacco, and every man, woman and child in this great Republic has been made acquainted with the appalling facts about this noisome weed, the vocation of the tobacconist will become as unsavory as that of the saloonist, and in due time an enlightened society will purge itself of this unclean and hateful thing. . . .

WOMEN SMOKE LESS THAN MEN AND LIVE LONGER

The mortality statistics show six male deaths to five female decedents. Sufficient cause for the greater life expectancy in women is to be found in their being less addicted to the use of alcohol and tobacco. It is claimed that ninety percent of all men smoke, while comparatively few women do so. The use of alcoholic liquors by women is much less than by men. Hunter has shown that the mortality of moderate drinkers is double that of abstainers, and according to Dwight, the records of the New England Mutual Life Insurance Company covering sixty years show that the mortality of smokers is 57.6 per cent greater than that of non-smokers. . . .

The great excess of male over female deaths begins at the age period from 15–25 years, the age when the smoking habit usually becomes established, and reaching its maximum at the age period of 40–44 years, the time of life when full maturity has been achieved and the old age process naturally begins. This is shown first in the hardening of the crystalline lens and the consequent loss in range of accommodation. In other words, the use of tobacco by 80–90 per

cent of the male population hastens the development of senility in the blood-vessels, thus lessening life expectancy since a man is as old as his arteries.

USE OF TOBACCO BY WOMEN

Among civilized nations, tobacco has never been used by women to the same extent as by men, although at the present time the use of tobacco by women is increasing.

Snuff dipping was at one time nearly universal among the women of the “poor white” class, but this filthy practice has in recent years declined to a marked degree. At the same time, however, the use of the cigarette by women has increased to a marked degree in certain circles in our great cities.

The *New York World* asserts that probably 100,000 New York women are smokers of cigarettes.

There can be no doubt that the practice is no longer confined to street women and actresses and women of the “smart set,” as a few years ago, but is rapidly extending to the more conservative classes. The suffragette movement seems to be in part responsible for this. The effect of securing civil and political equality with men seems to be to develop in a certain type of feminine minds the desire to enter into all sorts of masculine activities and even to acquire the vices of men. Of course this is not a legitimate result of the battle of women for freedom, but rather an undesirable by-product. This tendency was illustrated recently by a London paper which showed a picture of ultra-fashionable young women smokers in loose trousers, the up-to-date style of smoking dress for women.

The war has no doubt greatly extended the habit of smoking among women. A smoking craze has been set going in the country through a sort of incendiarism adroitly engineered by the tobacco trust. The public mind has been inoculated with the idea that soldiers must of necessity smoke and many young ladies have acquired the habit through a semi-patriotic impulse of good fellowship. . . .

Of course no one can question that women have as good a right to smoke as have men. Further, it must be granted that if smoking is necessary for men it is equally as necessary for women. No sound argument can be offered in defense of masculine smoking which will not apply equally to women.

In the case of women, however, the question of motherhood comes into consideration.

In Nancy, France, according to Dr. Mutrel, the death rate among breast fed children was extraordinarily high because of the presence of nicotine in the milk of the mothers employed in the tobacco factories. . . .

But in addition to contributing to infant mortality, there is ground for belief that the smoke habit among women must tend to lower the birth rate. The same disposition that would lead a woman to cultivate the tobacco habit would naturally lead her to avoid the perils, responsibilities and inconveniences of motherhood. . . . [B]ut if all mothers should become smokers, what would be the effect upon the future of the race? . . .

TOBACCO A REAL NARCOTIC

That tobacco is a narcotic drug, a “pain killer,” as definite if

not as potent as chloroform and ether, is shown by the fact that "before the time of chloroform and ether, tobacco was often administered to patients when great muscular relaxation was desired, as in cases of strangulated hernia and in fractures of the hip. This, plus a large dose of whiskey and morphine, rendered the patient fairly non-resistant to pain, during which time operations of even the most severe character were performed" (Isreal Bram, M.D.). . . .

TOBACCO-USING A DRUG HABIT

That tobacco is a form of "dope" as really as is opium, cocaine, or any other drug, cannot be denied. The confirmed cigarette smoker is as thoroughly enslaved as is the opium smoker or the alcohol inebriate. He is a "dope" fiend, to use a common, but rather repulsive phrase, an addict, and often requires the same restrictive measures to secure reclamation as does the confirmed alcoholic or opium habitué.

TOBACCO-USING LEADS TO ALCOHOLIC INTEMPERANCE

Naturally, one drug habit leads to another. It is rare to find an alcoholic who does not use tobacco in some form and often other drugs are used. There is a special reason for the association of the alcohol and tobacco habits; a physiologic reason: *Alcohol is a drug antidote for tobacco*.

Tobacco contracts the small arteries. This is the reason for the pallor observed in young smokers and in old smokers who have smoked to excess. Alcohol pro-

duces the opposite effect. It dilates the small arteries. This is the reason for the flushed face of the beer drinker and the red nose of the whiskey toper. A man who has smoked until his arteries are contracted, feels tense, nervous, irritable, restless, in spite of the narcotic effects of the drug. His blood-pressure is high and his breath a little "short." Besides, his secretions are checked, his mouth is dry. Alcohol reverses these conditions. A cocktail or a toddy, a glass of champagne or a bottle of beer, relaxes the blood vessels, relieves the nerve tension, restores comfort and, so opens the way for more cigars. . . .

Dr. Hamilton, superintendent of an "Institute" for the treatment of alcoholics, states that his experience is: "That persons applying for treatment for both liquor and cigarettes, dread giving up their cigarettes more than they do the liquor. Moreover, those who return to the use of cigarettes in after-life are almost certain to resume the use of liquor to allay the irritability of the nervous system produced by tobacco smoke inhalation."

THE MORAL EFFECTS OF TOBACCO USING

The only substantial apology offered for the use of tobacco is its psychic effect. Nobody claims that tobacco makes a man stronger or more enduring, clearer headed, keener of sight or hearing, more alert or in any way more efficient. Its effects are exactly the opposite as everybody knows. Tobacco is a narcotic. Its effects are those of a soother. It is in no sense a stimulant or an excitant. If a man feels more "fit" after a cigarette or a cigar, it is only because he has

become a drug addict and was suffering for the want of his accustomed "dope," not because he is in any way stimulated or strengthened.

Tobacco is a camouflage. It renders a man oblivious for the moment to fatigue, business cares, domestic and social infelicities, and other causes of psychic distress, but nobody has even suggested that tobacco *cures* any of these miseries. The man who is hungry smokes and no longer craves food, but *he has not been fed*. The hunger is there as before, but is hidden. The man who relieves fatigue by smoking has not been rested. The wasted nerves and muscles are weary as ever. Tobacco cannot take the place of food or rest. It does not solve business problems nor smooth out social or domestic difficulties. It is nothing but a psychic camouflage. . . .

The obtrusive manner in which smokers display their cigars and pipes in public and private places, filling the air of cabs, waiting rooms, theatres, offices, and all the places where people congregate, with the possible exception of churches and museums, with clouds of poisonous fumes and stale tobacco stench which are often the occasion of great distress as well as inconvenience to non-smokers, is substantial proof of the wholesale moral injury resulting from the use of the weed. . . .

THE ENORMOUS ECONOMIC WASTE FROM TOBACCO

Although the economic losses from the use of tobacco are of little consequence when compared to the injury to health, life and morals, they are well worth considering.

The amount of money annually expended for tobacco in this country alone amounted, according to Professor H. W. Farnum of Yale University, in 1917, to \$1,200,000,000.00. This was more than all the metals mined (gold, silver, iron, copper, etc.), in 1915, an average year, one-half more than the coal mined, three times the amount expended for highways, more than the total expenditure for education. And what did tobacco give us in return for this vast sum, sufficient to pay the interest on our war debt? Nothing at all but disease, death and race degeneracy. . . .

DOES A MAN NEED SOOTHING?

. . . If one needs relief from nervousness, there are far better means of lessening the tension than by tobacco. Rest, if necessary, and a warm, neutral bath will afford a wholesome relief such as no drug will give and will succeed even in cases where the most powerful drugs fail. This fact is demonstrated every day in the leading neuropathic institutes and state hospitals of the country. When a soothing drug is necessary, it should be administered by a physician and not by a street vendor or a bartender. Certainly, no well-informed physician would select one of the most treacherous and destructive of all the drugs known to man as the agent to be employed as a nerve quieter. Even opium does not produce the destructive changes in the body which have been shown experimentally and clinically to be produced by tobacco. ■